

FORM B – BUILDING

Assessor's Number USGS Quad Area(s) Form Number

7-568

Orleans

N

EAS.250

MASSACHUSETTS HISTORICAL COMMISSION
MASSACHUSETTS ARCHIVES BUILDING
220 MORRISSEY BOULEVARD
BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS 02125

Town/City: EASTHAM

Place: (*neighborhood or village*): Campground Road
Area

Photograph



Address: 55 Bay Road

Historic Name: Irving and Clara Peters House

Uses: Present: Single Family Dwelling House

Original: Single Family Dwelling House

Date of Construction: ca. 1930

Source: Title research, Eastham Tax Commitment
Books

Style/Form: No Style/ Bungalow

Architect/Builder: Unknown

Exterior Material:

Foundation: Concrete block

Wall/Trim: Wood shingles/ Wood

Roof: Asphalt shingles

Outbuildings/Secondary Structures:
None

Major Alterations (*with dates*):
Window replacements (dates unknown)

Condition: Good

Moved: no ☒ yes ☐ **Date:**

Acreage: 0.34 acres

Setting: This property is located on a parcel bounded on the east by Bay Road and on the south by Gail's Way. The surrounding area was subdivided with small cottage lots starting in the early-20th century, and now includes modest cottages and houses from the early-20th to the early-21st centuries. This larger parcel combines two parcels from a 1912 subdivision. This house sits at the northeast corner of its parcel on a slight rise. A small circular asphalt driveway leads across the front of the house. The parcel is landscaped with lawn and foundation plantings.

Locus Map



Recorded by: Eric Dray, Preservation Consultant, for

Organization: Eastham Historical Commission

Date (*month / year*): April 2025

INVENTORY FORM B CONTINUATION SHEET

EASTHAM

55 BAY ROAD

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☐ Recommended for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

If checked, you must attach a completed National Register Criteria Statement form.

Use as much space as necessary to complete the following entries, allowing text to flow onto additional continuation sheets.

ARCHITECTURAL DESCRIPTION:

Describe architectural features. Evaluate the characteristics of this building in terms of other buildings within the community.

This is an astylistic example of a Bungalow with its back turned to Bay Road, likely to take advantage of views towards the bay. The house has a 1½-story, side-gable form, with an off-centered dormer on the rear roof slope. The lower portion of the rear roof slope has a shallower pitch which may suggest it began as an open porch. The house rests on a raised concrete block foundation, and the basement level of the house on the south side is fully exposed as the land slopes away. The elevations are clad in weathered wood shingles with painted plain cornerboards. The roof is clad in asphalt shingles with projecting open eaves typical of early cottage construction. Any original chimneys have been removed. The varying-sized windows, including an unusual three-part window system on the second story of the south elevation, have all been replaced with modern thermal 6/6 double-hung sash.

HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

Discuss the history of the building. Explain its associations with local (or state) history. Include uses of the building, and the role(s) the owners/occupants played within the community.

Incorporated as Nauset Plantation in 1646, and changed to Eastham in 1651, Eastham territory originally extended south to Pleasant Bay in Orleans and north beyond Wellfleet Harbor. The early development pattern for what we now know as Eastham was impacted by its absence of deep-water harbor facilities. Relatively fertile soil led to dispersed agricultural settlement, but residential and commercial development was concentrated to the north at Wellfleet Harbor and to the south at Town Cove and Pleasant Bay. When the separate towns of Wellfleet and Orleans were created in the late-18th century, Eastham became and remained one of the least populated towns on the Cape throughout the 19th century.

In the 19th century, Eastham was the agricultural center of the Outer Cape. Crops evolved over time; corn and dairy were surpassed in the early-20th century by asparagus and turnips - two crops well suited for the sandy soil. In 1900, 58% of Eastham's workers were employed as farmers, but by 1930 that number had dwindled to 21%. Summer resort development, including cottage colonies and subdivisions of former farmland that would transform Eastham, had begun in earnest in the 1920s as middle-class access to car ownership increased and Cape roads were improved.

This property is connected to the cottage development around Campground Road - one of the three earliest roads to extend west to Cape Cod Bay from the central sections of Eastham. Despite the early development of the road, which was established to serve the Methodist camp meetings in the mid-19th century, the great majority of houses that border it, especially to the north, are 20th-century vernacular summer cottages and retirement houses.

One of the early subdivisions at the west end of Campground Road was recorded in 1915 by Robert E. Horton, who was then living in Boston (Figure 2).¹ The 64-lot subdivision created what is now the northern portion of Bay Road, Gails Way, Marions Way, and the southwestern portion of Gile Road. It was one of three subdivisions that he registered. Robert E. Horton, whose father Robert R. Horton, had been a grocer, railroad station master, and postmaster in North Eastham, purchased a large parcel abutting the area's first subdivision by Alonzo Higgins. The land Horton bought had belonged to farmers Barnabas K. Mayo and William H. Nickerson in the 19th century.

This property sits on Lots 18 and 19 of that 1915 subdivision. That same year, Robert Horton sold 39 of the lots to Alma B. Freeman of Boston, and in 1917 she sold 31 of those lots, including Lots 18 and 19, to Herbert T. Seavey of Stoughton.² In 1917, Seavey

¹ Barnstable County Registry of Deeds, Plan Book 3/ Page 17.

² Book 335/ Page 420, Book 356/ Page 294.

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sold just Lot 18 to Leslie H. Morse of Ashland, MA; and in 1926, Morse sold Lot 18 to Irving L. and Clara A. Peters of Grafton.³ Also in 1917, Seavey sold Lot 19 to another Ashland resident, James F. Taylor, Jr.; and in 1929, Taylor sold Lot 19 to Irving and Clara Peters, thereby joining the two parcels.⁴ The deeds all had the stipulation that one house could be built and it must cost at least \$350 to build. (Note: Leslie Morse also bought the adjacent Lots 31 and 32 and built a cottage that is still in the family.)

This house has an Assessor date of 1937, but the house may be slightly older than that. Eastham Tax Commitment Books can assist in identifying building construction dates. The Tax Books first assessed Irving Peters in 1930 with a cottage valued at \$900.

Irving L. Peters (1887-1975) married Clara A. Wheeler (1890-1987) in Springfield, MA in 1916. According to census records, Irving worked his entire life as a (travelling) salesman in a variety of industries, including hardware, automobiles, textiles and asbestos. This house stayed in the Peters family until 1986, when it was sold to Robert E. and Karen L. Kear of South Salem, NY.⁵ In 1998, the Kears sold it to George H. and Sylvia A. Heitman of Shrewsbury⁶, and it remains in their extended family.

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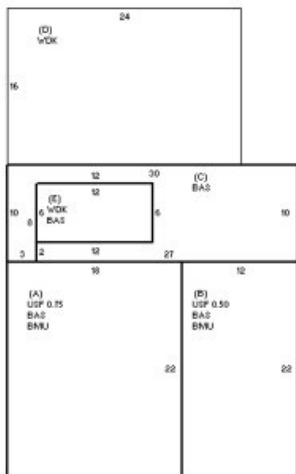


Figure 1. Assessor Sketch.



Photo 2. View looking southwest.

³ Book 356/ Page 264, Book 439/ Page 371.

⁴ Book 356/ Page 304, Book 468/ Page 232.

⁵ Book 5380/ Page 269.

⁶ Book 11511/ Page 142.

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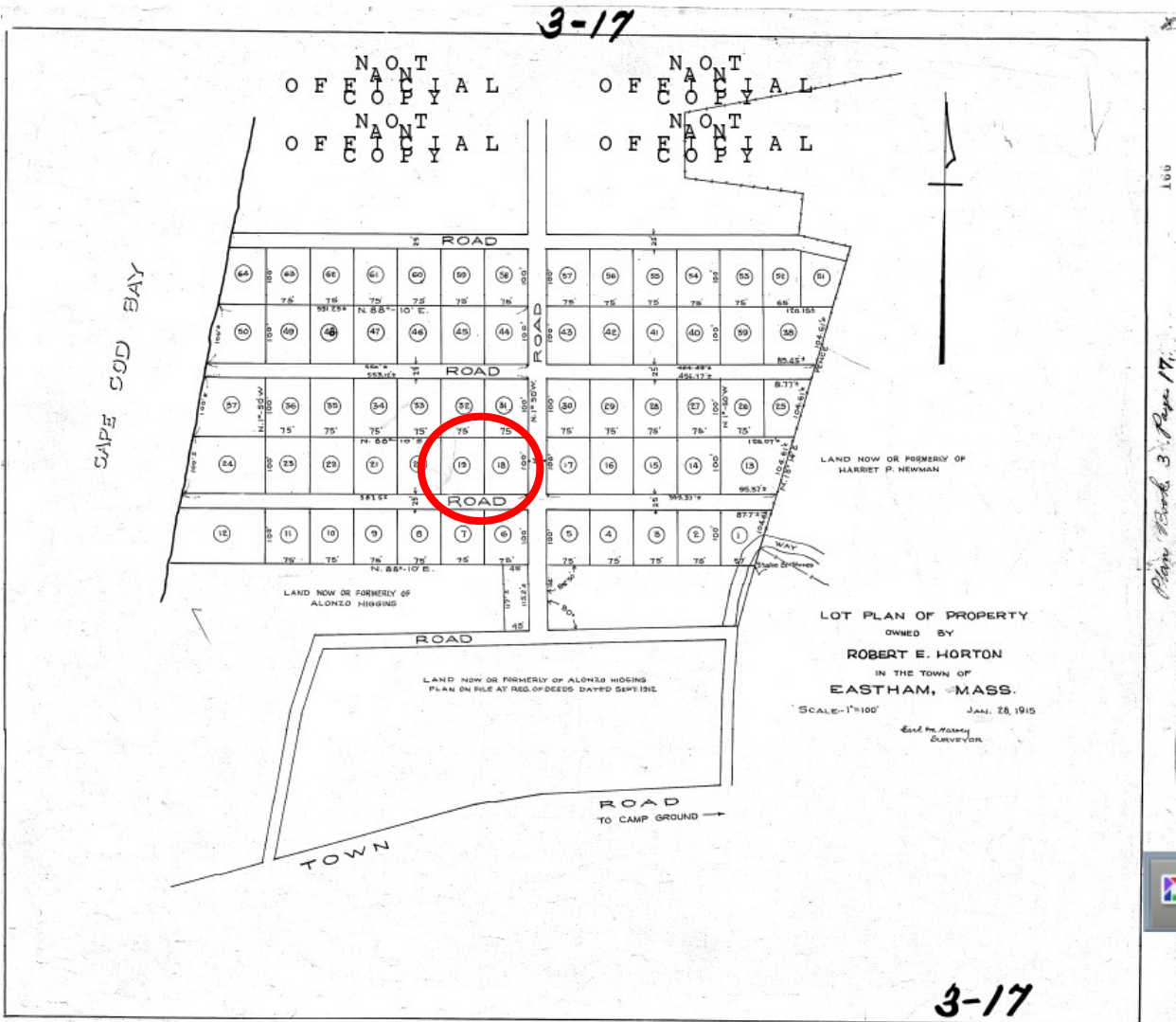


Figure 2. Lot Plan prepared for Robert E. Horton, June 28, 1915 (circle around Lots 18 and 19 added).